

REMARKS

A. Amendment to the Specification

The above-listed amendments to the specification include all amendments effected thereto during the prosecution of United States Patent Application Serial No. 139,705 filed August 25, 1998 (hereinafter "the Parent Application"), as well as amendments to the headings used throughout the specification.

The amendments to the headings bring those into conformity with the form and format recommended by the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The balance of the amendments serve the purpose exclusively of permitting the specification to refer with particularity to the figures in view of the several amendments that are also herein proposed to be effected in those figures.

The proposed amendments to the specification do not add new matter, and accordingly entry thereof is respectfully requested.

B. Amendments to the Claims

New Claims 24-47 are supported by the specification as originally filed.

Accordingly, entry thereof is respectfully requested.

C. Amendments to the Abstract

The above-listed amendments to the Abstract bring the heading thereof into conformity with the form and format recommended by the United States Patent and Trademark Office and reduce to 150 or less the number of words therein.

Entry thereof is respectfully requested.

D. Amendments to the Figures

The above-listed amendments to the figures include all amendments effected thereto during the prosecution of the Parent Application and serve to bring the figures as originally filed into conformity with the rules of patent practice in effect before the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

The amendments to the figures serve only to identify with reference characters structural features clearly shown in the drawings as originally filed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the above-listed amendments to the drawings do not add new matter, and the approval of the Examiner for the entry thereof is respectfully requested.

For the convenience of the Examiner in this regard, transmitted herewith under cover of a Letter to the Official Draftsperson is a complete set of the figures as originally filed prepared in complete compliance with the formal requirements of the United States Patent and Trademark Office and containing all of the above-listed proposed amendments to those figures. In addition, transmitted therewith is an identical set of the figures with the proposed amendment thereto relative to the figures as originally filed highlighted in red.

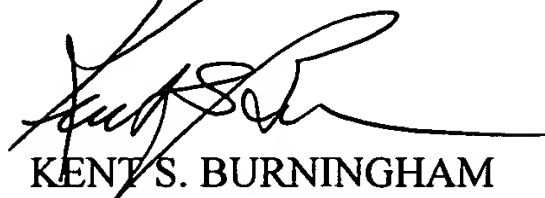
E. Conclusion

Examination on the merits is respectfully requested of Claims 24-47 newly presented herein.

Should the Examiner encounter any impediment to a prompt allowance of this application, and should that impediment be susceptible to resolution through a telephone conversation, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate such a telephone conference with the undersigned.

DATED this 27th day of March, 2001.

Respectfully submitted,



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